

Detroit City Council Member Jo Ann Watson
2 Woodward Avenue, 1340 CAYMC
Detroit, MI 48226
Telephone: 313-224-4535 Fax: 313-224-1524
Email: watsonj@cncl.ci.detroit.mi.us



Wake Up Detroit!

Vol. 7 Issue 1 2009

Save and Preserve Detroit's Assets: Watson Against Water Rate Hike and Cobo Center Sale

At a recent Detroit City Council Quality of Life Task Force Meeting discussion about the proposed Detroit Marshall Plan passed by City Council, Council President Pro Tempore JoAnn Watson reiterated her position that Detroit's Assets must be preserved in order for the City of Detroit to return to prosperity. Chief among those assets is the hardworking people of Detroit. Unfortunately based on the excruciating tough economic times, almost one third of the population currently are laid-off or unemployed. The vast majority of whom want desperately to return to work. For those reasons, Watson asserts that government resources must step in to provide alternative work opportunities for heads of households. In the interim, Watson believes that annual Department of Water and Sewerage water rate hikes further hurt beleaguered families struggling to pay their bills and keep their homes. Watson consistently votes against Department of Water and Sewerage water rate increases. Watson advocates against utility shut-offs in extreme weather conditions. "People should not die because they cannot pay a utility bill, exclaimed Watson."

During a February 3, 2009 Committee of the Whole session discussion regarding the pending sale of Cobo Convention Center, Watson clearly stated her support of an expansion of the Cobo facilities. However, Watson did not appreciate the "backroom deals" and "slight of hand finagling" by some of the parties involved in the current state legislation, which did not include direct dialogue with the Detroit City Council. For numerous reasons, Watson does not support the current state legislation that requires the sale of Cobo Convention Center to an authority. In fact, Watson is aware that at least one proponent of the Cobo Center sale encouraged state legislators to remove any need to interact with the Detroit City Council despite the Charter's requirement of the Council's responsibility for city assets. Indeed, Watson determined that the \$20 million dollar pay-off of the Municipal Parking Department's bonds and the \$200 million dollar developer tax credits is a paltry exchange. Especially, in light of the \$63 million dollar cash state grant given to the city of Grand Rapids for development of Grand Rapids convention center. The approved state bill that was supported by Detroit's state legislative caucus requires City Council disapproval within 45 days of the bill's passage. Otherwise, the state approved authority takeover becomes effective 90 days after the passage of the bill. The state-approved authority includes five representatives appointed by the Governor, Mayor of Detroit, Oakland County Executive, Macomb County Executive, and Wayne County Executive.

Summer Jobs for Detroit Youth

Detroit City Council Division Director, Mr. Marcel Todd of the City Planning Commission reported at the most recent Neighborhood and Community Services Committee that partnership efforts with the executive branch's Planning and Development Department indicate that appropriate block grant funds are in place to financially support a 2009 youth summer jobs program. Last year, Council Member Watson spearheaded funding allocation efforts that culminated with the Mayor directing the Workforce Development Department to supervise the youth summer jobs assisted by Career Works and the Year-round Employment Program. At this point the application screening and processing procedures are unclear. Over 4,000 Detroit teenagers were employed in 2008, with the majority working as Detroit Police Cadets. Residents are encouraged to contact the Mayor's Office to voice support for Detroit youth summer jobs.

Wake Up Detroit! Detroit City Council Member JoAnn Watson, Publisher and Editor, Elizabeth C. Ayana Johnson, Writer, Design, and Co-Editor
Community Distribution: Cordelia Blake, Matilda Bland, Charles Brown, Joyce Bruton, Sheila Cook, Sandra Epps, Marcia Evans, William Heard, Andrew Johnson, Elizabeth C. Ayana Johnson, and Fannie Tyler



Watson Receives Bunyan Bryant Award

The Michigan Chapter of the Sierra Club recently voted to present Council President Pro-Tempore with the Bunyan Bryant Award in recognition of her exemplary leadership in furthering environmental justice as an elected City Council member and an active community leader. This honor will be bestowed based upon Watson initiating an official City Council environmental justice task force and her key role leading the passage of City Council's policy resolution calling for a New Business Model for Solid Waste featuring recycling and resource recovery without incineration of municipal waste. Watson receives the Bunyan Bryant Award on Saturday, February 7, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. at the Central United Methodist Church in conjunction with the "Detroit Zero Waste Public Forum."

Watson welcomes 2009 Black Enterprise Conference and Exposition to Detroit Marriot and Cobo Convention Center



Council President Pro Tempore JoAnn Watson, chairperson of the Detroit City Council Neighborhood and Community Services Committee recently invited Ms. Stephanie Moore, a local area youth sexual abuse counselor to report on the efforts of her advocacy to bring the 14th annual Black Enterprise Conference to Detroit. This national conference which attracts recognized Black industry leaders, Black professionals and Black business owners comes to the Detroit Marriott and Cobo Convention Center May17-20, 2009 in Detroit, Michigan. General Motors hosts this year's conference with the theme, "Shifting Gears: New Markets, New Opportunities." Charlotte, North Carolina and Lake Buena Vista, Florida hosted the 2008 and 2007 Black Enterprise Conferences, respectively.

Thank You!

Dear Council Member Watson,

On behalf of Operation Get Down, Inc., I would like to thank you for your donation of Kroger \$250 value gift cards. The cards were used to purchase food for our Client 2008 Kwanzaa celebration. Please accept our sincere thanks and appreciation for your contribution to our agency. It is because of individuals like you, which enables organizations such as ours, to continue to meet the needs of the community. The staff and I welcome you to come and visit with us at anytime. Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

Sandra Bomar Parker, CEO
